

# Nature Connections

In Southwest Missouri

March/April 2012



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Conservation &  
Audubon Center**

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## Restoring Native Wildlife



*The richest values of the wilderness lie not in the days of  
Daniel Boone, nor even in the present, but rather in the future.*

*Aldo Leopold*

The Missouri Department of Conservation is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and one important aspect of the celebration is recognizing the successful wildlife restoration efforts that have occurred throughout the agency's history. The dictionary defines restoration as "a return of something to a former, original, normal, or unimpaired condition." For our agency, it is also a constitutional mandate—to control, manage, restore, conserve, and regulate the forest, fish, and wildlife resources of the state. Many successful partnerships and programs have helped to restore numerous wildlife populations in Missouri.

### Past

When the Conservation Department was formed on November 3, 1936, abuses to the land and game laws dictated by politics rather than by sound biological research had decimated many wildlife species. Bison, elk, bear, and mountain lions had been wiped out as early as 1900 and even common species, like deer and turkey, were rarely seen. In order to restore wildlife, habitats first had to be improved. That meant protecting remnant prairie, improving stream quality, replanting forests, building ponds, and protecting soil. Remaining wildlife populations also had to be safeguarded.

White-tailed deer were the first species to be restored back to their original state. In the 1930s, they were seldom seen and the remaining individuals were protected until their numbers increased enough to trap and relocate them to other areas of the state. Likewise, the gobble of a wild turkey, so common today, was rarely heard in the 1950s when only an estimated 2,500 birds remained. Turkeys were protected at Peck Ranch, a Conservation Area in Shannon County, until their numbers increased enough to

be trapped and relocated. A big piece of their success story goes to the rural landowners who agreed to help protect them. Today, both deer and turkey are common in every county. The success of the wild turkey has also proved helpful in restoring other species. Turkeys have been traded to other states for ruffed grouse, river otters, prairie chickens, and several species of fish. Canada geese, lake sturgeon, paddlefish, and bald eagles are just a few additional success stories.

### Present

Two very different species have made restoration news lately—elk and hellbenders. In Kentucky, 34 elk were trapped and released in holding pens at Peck Ranch Conservation Area last May before being released to roam

the area freely in June. Soon elk calves were being born and taking their first steps on Missouri soil where they had lived historically. Plans are underway now for another round of trapping in Kentucky so more elk will be released this year. Hellbenders, which are large, aquatic salamanders, have decreased dramatically in number in recent years with an estimate of only 600 left in the world today. This species was recently added to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's federal endangered species list. After a decade-long period of trying to breed hellbenders in captivity, the St. Louis Zoo made history recently when they were successful in producing more than 180 young hellbenders. Once they reach maturity, they will be released back into the streams where they have lived historically.

Restoration work on prairie chickens, an endangered species that once numbered in the hundreds of thousands, is also taking place. Last year 78 prairie chickens were trapped in Kansas and released at Wah'Kon-Tah Prairie in Cedar and St. Clair County in an effort to increase the current population which is now estimated at 100 birds.

With suitable habitat, other native species have made a natural return to Missouri. Breeding populations of black bear are not uncommon in the Missouri Ozarks after they were successfully reintroduced to wilderness areas in Arkansas during the 1970s. Last year there were numerous confirmed sightings of mountain lions in Missouri, although no evidence of a breeding population exists.

### Future

There is still much work to do in the future to protect both wildlife species and their habitat. Whether your version of human and wildlife interaction is viewing an animal in the wild or harvesting a game animal for the dinner table, restoring native wildlife is essential to the quality of our lives in Missouri.

— Linda Chorce, Nature Center Manager



201 W. RIVIERA DRIVE, SUITE B  
JOPLIN, MO 64804

The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase a fishing/hunting license, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 190 acres of Wildcat Park, you will find a diverse mix of wildlife habitats rich with flora and fauna.

**HOURS:** Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm  
Closed all state holidays  
Audubon Center hours vary

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-44, take exit 6, and turn left on MO-86. Turn right on Riviera Drive to enter Wildcat Park.

### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Call 417-629-3423 to sign up for a program requiring registration. Programs are free.

**WEBSITE:** [mdc.mo.gov/node/292](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/292)

## MARCH & APRIL EVENTS

### DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES INTRO TO CRAPPIE FISHING

MARCH 9 ~ FRIDAY ~ 6:30–8PM

WALTER WOODS CONSERVATION AREA

Registration required (Families) Spring is a



great time to catch crappie. Bring the family and learn the basics about crappie biology, spring fishing techniques, and where to fish.

### BASHIN' TRASH

MARCH 31 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8AM–12NOON

WILDCAT GLADES CONSERVATION  
& AUDUBON CENTER

Registration required (All ages) Gather your friends, family, or organization to help bring the beauty back to Wildcat Park and Shoal Creek. We'll meet at the center in Wildcat Park at 8am to distribute trash bags and receive section assignments. Refreshments will be provided. Wear your water shoes, work gloves, and appropriate clothing to "bash trash."

### NATURESCAPING/RAIN GARDEN WORKSHOP

APRIL 7 ~ SATURDAY ~ 9AM–12NOON

WILDCAT GLADES CONSERVATION  
& AUDUBON CENTER

Registration required (Ages 12 and up)

Many trees and yards were destroyed by the May 22 tornado impacting birds and other wildlife. Adding native plants and a rain garden to your yard will help create valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife and help to reduce flooding and sediment and other pollutants harmful to local streams. Learn about the beauty, diversity, and benefits of planting native plants, shrubs, and trees in your yard. We will share plant selection tips and basic designs you can easily initiate on your property. Participants will take home handouts, native shrubs, and wildflowers. This is a free partnership program between Audubon Missouri and the Missouri Department of Conservation. Limited space is available. Preference will be given to those living or rebuilding in the tornado impact zone.

### SHOAL CREEK CLEANUP

APRIL 14 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8AM–4PM

GRAND FALLS to SCHERMERHORN PARK

Registration required (All ages) We will put the bash on stream trash with a canoeing cleanup. Join various conservation partners including the Southwest Ozark Stream Teams for this Missouri/Kansas partnership to beautify Shoal Creek. This event is open to the public. A limited number of canoes will be available to adults and teens with canoeing experience. Refreshments will be provided.

### JOPLIN EARTH DAY BACKYARD RECOVERY

APRIL 21 ~ SATURDAY ~ 9AM–12NOON

PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS TO BE  
ANNOUNCED

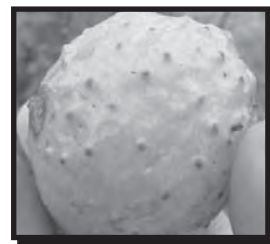
No registration required (All ages) Help celebrate Earth Day while replanting and rebuilding Joplin's backyard habitat. The City of Joplin, Audubon Missouri, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and other conservation partners are teaming up to provide area residents with native tree saplings, shrubs, birdhouses, landscaping resources, plans, and more to assist with beautifying Joplin and benefiting the local birds and wildlife. The event is free and open to the public.

## ASK THE NATURALIST

### What is this?

This common oddity is an insect gall. Different types of fungi, bacteria, mites, and nematodes may create galls, but insects such as specific species of wasps, beetles, flies, and moths, are the most common cause of galls. These abnormal growths occur when an insect lays an egg or the larva feeds on growing plant tissue. The egg or larva irritates the plant tissues which quickly surround the organism providing protection and food until the insect matures. Look for galls on a variety of plants such as oaks, hackberries, blackberries, and goldenrods. The shape—round balls, folded leaves, blisters, or tubes—and placement of galls will depend on the insect that caused it. Galls do not cause serious damage to plants and do not need to be removed. Some early Missourians believed galls possessed future-telling powers and several old folk remedies called for galls.

— Kevin Badgley, Interpretive Center Manager



## SPRING BREAK PASSPORTS TO DISCOVERY!

MARCH 17 to  
MARCH 25

9AM–5PM

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

12NOON–4PM

SUNDAY

Stop by the Audubon Center or Missouri Department of Conservation's Joplin Office and pick up "Your



Peep Passport" and begin your journey to discover some of Southwest Missouri's interpretive sites (parks, nature centers, and historic sites) all within easy driving distance of Joplin. After answering specific questions at each site, you'll get a stamp in your passport. After receiving six stamps, you'll receive a PEEP (Partnership for Environmental Education Programs) patch. This is a great family activity for spring break! (One passport per family, please.)







4897 N. FARM ROAD 61  
ASH GROVE, MO 65604

Facilities include an outdoor education center and archery, rifle, pistol, and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

### HOURS:

#### September 14 – April 14

Monday & Thursday: 9am – 4:30pm

Friday – Sunday: 12noon – 4:30pm

#### April 15 – September 13

Monday: 9am – 4:30pm

Thursday: 9am – 7:30pm

Friday – Sunday: 12noon – 4:30pm

Closed Tuesdays & Wednesdays and all state holidays. Hours are subject to change.

**FACILITIES AND FEES:** Available for individual and group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range fee: \$3 per booth per hour
- Trap/skeet range fee: \$3 per person per round of 25 clay targets
- Shotgun patterning range: \$3 per person per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour
- Group use fee: \$20 per hour plus \$3 per round of 25 clay targets

**DIRECTIONS:** US Highway 160 west of Willard, turn south on Farm Road 61, and go 2.5 miles, facility on the west side of road.

### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Call 417-742-4361 to sign up for a program requiring registration. Programs are free.

**WEBSITE:** [mdc.mo.gov/2332](http://mdc.mo.gov/2332)

**PLEASE NOTE:** The rifle and pistol ranges will be closed for repairs beginning April 2 and are scheduled to reopen on April 18. All other venues will remain open for public use.

## MARCH & APRIL EVENTS

### DISCOVER HUNTING

#### NRA-FIRST STEPS HANDGUN BASICS

MARCH 3 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8:30–11:30AM

Registration required (Ages 21 and up)



Join us for a NRA (National Rifle Association) First Steps handgun basics course. You may bring your unloaded handgun to the class or use ours. You must be 21 years of age or older to participate in this program. This course does not satisfy the CCW (Carrying a Concealed Weapon) requirements under Missouri law.

### DISCOVER HUNTING

#### SPRING TURKEY HUNTING CLINIC

MARCH 17 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8:30AM–3PM

Registration required (All ages) Join us to



learn the basics of spring turkey hunting in Missouri. We will cover identification, calling, safety, finding the right setup, and scouting for success.



**S**pring turkey season is just around the corner and I always feel the need to discuss hunting safely. In Missouri each year, we investigate several turkey hunting-related shooting incidents. Many of these incidents are labeled as “victim mistaken for game.”

Every one of the incidents I have reviewed could have been prevented if the shooter involved had followed a few of the safety rules taught in Hunter Education courses around the state.

Let's think our way through this. You hunt turkey with a shotgun with pellets size 4, 5, or 6. The largely accepted effective range for hunting with a shotgun is considered to be 40 yards or less with 20 to 30 yards being common. See where I am headed with this? I have a difficult time understanding how one human mistakes another for a turkey at these distances. The sad truth is that it does happen. The good news is that through education and implementation of knowledge and skills learned, the incident rate has declined dramatically over the past 10 years. Remember, during spring turkey season you may only harvest a bird with a visible beard and you must have a “Be Safe” sticker on your firearm. Here are a few of the turkey hunting safety rules we teach:

- Always point the muzzle of firearms in a safe direction in the field and at home.
- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Always make sure the firearm is unloaded and the action locked open, except while you are hunting.
- Always positively identify your target and what is beyond it before taking the safety off and firing.
- Never shoot at sound, color, or movement alone. Avoid wearing the colors of red, white, blue, or black.
- Develop a hunt plan and stick to it.
- Use the correct ammunition for your firearm.
- Keep your hands and head camouflaged when calling.
- Selecting a spot that is in open timber rather than thick brush, wearing camouflage clothing, and eliminating movement is more critical to success than hiding in heavy cover.
- When using a camouflage blind or netting, maintain a clear field of view.
- Never transport decoys uncovered. Many of the new decoys fold up for easy storage in turkey vests.
- Always set up against a tree that is taller than your head and wider than your shoulders.
- Establish a clear line of vision for at least 100 yards and then set up the decoys 20 yards from your position on the line.
- If you see another hunter, call out in a loud, clear voice to alert them to your position and sit motionless until they respond back to you.
- Always check carefully that no one else is stalking your decoys before leaving your position.
- Wear a blaze orange hat when moving.

For information about season dates and possession and daily bag limits, go to [www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov).

– Mike Brooks, Outdoor Education Center Supervisor

# Springfield Conservation Nature Center



4601 S. NATURE CENTER WAY  
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65804

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Indoors, enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through a variety of natural communities.

## CURRENT HOURS:

**March 1 – October 31**

**Building** Tuesday – Saturday: 8am – 5pm  
Sunday: 12noon – 5pm

**Trails** Sunday – Saturday: 8am – 8pm

## TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Call 417-888-4237 to sign up for a program requiring registration. Programs are free.

**WEBSITE:** [mdc.mo.gov/2360](http://mdc.mo.gov/2360)

## MARCH EVENTS

Registration begins March 1

### BADGE BONANZA

MARCH 6 ~ TUESDAY ~ 6:30–8PM

*Registration required* (All ages) *Attention all scouting and youth organizations!* Here's a program to help you earn nature badges on Missouri animals and their characteristics, food chains, habitats, and more. Activities are also open to the public.

### PARENTS AS TEACHERS STORY TIME

MARCH 8 ~ THURSDAY ~ 9:30, 10:30, OR 11:30AM

*No registration required* (Ages 0–5) Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a *Nature At Its Best* story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children. Each session is forty-five minutes in length.

### DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES

#### BLUEBIRD BASICS

MARCH 13 ~ TUESDAY ~ 6:30–7:30PM

*Registration required* (Families with children ages 5 and up) Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to learn about our beautiful state bird, the eastern bluebird, and assemble a bluebird house (1 per family) to take home. Bluebirds like open, rural areas and will not be attracted to or nest in most urban areas.



### STORY TIME WITH MS. LADYBUG

MARCH 14 ~ WEDNESDAY ~ 11–11:30AM

*No registration required* (Ages 2–6) Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds.

### BABES IN THE WOODS CELEBRATES SPRING

MARCH 16 ~ FRIDAY ~ 10–11AM

MARCH 17 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10–11AM

*Registration required* (Ages 0–2) Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0–2 year old. Bring a stroller.

### CONSERVATION TEEN CLUB: HIKE

MARCH 17 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10AM–4PM

*Registration required* (Ages 12–17) Have you got cabin fever? Are you tired of being cooped up inside the house? Join us for a hike through the Pleasant Hope Conservation Area. Bring a day pack and rain gear. Wear comfortable hiking shoes and layers of clothing to stay warm. Lunch and transportation will be provided.

### SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE

MARCH 20 ~ TUESDAY ~ 1–2:30PM

*Registration required* (Ages 7 and up) Take a casual stroll with Volunteer Specialist Ruby Ball for a close look at spring wildflowers.

### SPRING WILDFLOWER DISCOVERY TABLE

MARCH 20 ~ TUESDAY ~ 1–3PM

*No registration required* (All ages) Stop by to learn which wildflowers are blooming now and where to find them. Kids can make a craft to take home too.

### RIVERBLUFF CAVE DISCOVERIES

MARCH 22 ~ THURSDAY ~ 7–8PM

*Registration required* (Ages 10 and up) From the comfort of the auditorium, take a visual tour of one of America's oldest caves right here in Springfield—Riverbluff Cave. Through the eyes of Paleontologist and Executive Director Matt Forir, learn about conservation efforts, new discoveries, and secrets locked inside this ancient cave.

### HIKING CLUB

MARCH 24 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8:30AM–3PM

*Registration required* (Ages 18 and up) Explore Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area with Volunteer Naturalist Pat Stritzel. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately four miles and of moderate difficulty.

### THE ART OF WOODCARVING

MARCH 24 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10–11AM

*Registration required* (Ages 12 and up) Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art.

### WOODCARVING DEMONSTRATION

MARCH 24 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10AM–4PM

*No registration required* (All ages) Visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the “wood-be” carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces.

### CRAPPIE FISHING FOR BEGINNERS

MARCH 28 ~ WEDNESDAY ~ 7–8PM

*Registration required* (Ages 10 and up) Crappie fishing is a favorite pastime for many anglers in the Ozarks. Whether you fish during winter or wait for them to spawn in the spring, crappie can be caught throughout the year. Join Table Rock Fisheries Biologist Shane Bush and Outdoor Skills Specialist Greg Collier as we explore when, where, and how to catch one of the Ozarks favorite panfish.

### CONSERVATION KIDS' CLUB NATURE'S CLEANUP CREW

MARCH 29 ~ THURSDAY ~ 6:30–7:45PM

*Registration required* (Ages 7–12) More than just a tasty treat, a dead animal means survival to Missouri's scavengers and decomposers. For crows, coyotes, and carrion beetles, death equals life. Join us as we discover what really happens to an animal after it dies. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

### DISCOVER NATURE WOMEN HIKING AT HENNING CONSERVATION AREA

MARCH 31 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8:30AM–2PM

*Registration required* (Women and girls ages 14–17 with an adult participant) Learn the basics of hiking in the Ozarks. We'll show you what you'll need before carpooling to the Henning Conservation Area in Branson to hike the Homesteaders Trail. Hike is approximately 3.8 miles and moderate to difficult. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. This program is for women only.



## LITTLE ACORNS

*Registration required* (Ages 3–6) Programs are 45 minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE ACORNS programs to one per month.

### ANT ANTICS

MARCH 9 ~ FRIDAY ~ 11AM OR 1:30PM

MARCH 10 ~ SATURDAY ~ 11AM

Have fun as we explore the antics of these tiny insects and then create an “antsy” craft to take home.

### SPRING HAS SPRUNG

MARCH 16 ~ FRIDAY ~ 11AM OR 1:30PM

MARCH 17 ~ SATURDAY ~ 11AM

Come hear a special story about some nature center residents as they wake up to spring!

### BACKYARD BIRDS

MARCH 21 ~ WEDNESDAY ~ 11AM OR 1:30PM

Birds are interesting and fun to watch! Learn the calls of several birds and discover ways to attract them to your yard.



# Springfield Conservation Nature Center

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITS

### MARCH

Mingo Swamp Flora and Fauna  
Photography Contest-2011

### APRIL

Botanical Photography by members  
of the Missouri Native Plant Society,  
Southwest Missouri Chapter

## APRIL EVENTS

Registration begins April 3

### NATIVE PLANT SEMINAR AND SALE

APRIL 7 ~ SATURDAY ~ 9AM-4PM

No registration required (All ages) Landscaping

with native plant  
species provides urban  
habitat for a diversity  
of wildlife and offers  
alternatives to the  
traditional water-  
and chemical-  
dependent  
manicured lawn.

A series of guest  
speakers will share the

benefits of incorporating native plants  
into your landscape. The day will also include  
exhibitors and a native plant sale. Call to receive  
a flier listing the day's activities.

### PRIMITIVE SKILLS SERIES USEFUL PLANT HIKE

APRIL 8 ~ SUNDAY ~ 1-3PM

Registration required (Ages 15 and up) Plants  
have always been important to humans for  
food, medicine, and other purposes. Volunteer  
Specialist Don Brink will explore the folklore and  
modern uses of several Missouri plants.

### DR. BILL ROSTON NATIVE BUTTERFLY HOUSE-LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING

APRIL 10 ~ TUESDAY ~ 7-8:30PM

Registration required (Ages 12 and up) The  
Dr. Bill Roston Native Butterfly House is in its  
third year of operation in Nathanael Greene/  
Close Memorial Park in Springfield. Volunteers  
will share information about native butterflies,  
natural history, and current conservation  
projects taking place at the Butterfly House.  
Learn how you can become involved in butterfly  
conservation in general and about volunteer  
opportunities at the Butterfly House in  
particular.

### STORY TIME WITH MS. LADYBUG

APRIL 11 ~ WEDNESDAY ~ 11-11:30AM

No registration required (Ages 2-6) Join  
Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads  
a nature story and shares activities with your  
2-6 year olds.

### HIKING CLUB AND FOR ADULTS ONLY

APRIL 14 ~ SATURDAY ~ 8AM-12:30PM

Registration required (Ages 18 and up)  
Trekking is a great way to explore the Ozarks  
and every year more and more hikers utilize  
conservation area trails. Here is your chance  
to give back by helping with trail maintenance  
at Busiek State Forest and Wildlife Area. We  
will install "water bars" across the trail to help  
reduce soil erosion. Hand tools such as shovels,  
picks, and rakes will be provided. Meet at the  
nature center and carpool. Bring water and  
gloves and wear comfortable hiking shoes.

### OZARK WHITTLERS & WOODCARVERS

APRIL 14 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10AM-4PM

No registration required (All ages) Stop by  
to see members of the Ozark Whittlers &  
Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

### HUNTING MISSOURI'S WILD MUSHROOMS

APRIL 17 ~ TUESDAY ~ 5-6PM

Registration required (Ages 10 and up)  
Mushrooms are intriguing. They can be tricky  
to find and even more difficult to identify. Join  
author Maxine Stone for a short guided hike  
to learn about hunting Missouri's elusive  
mushrooms. (To learn more, be sure to register  
for her 7pm presentation as well.)

### MORELS AND MORE MISSOURI'S WILD SPRING MUSHROOMS

APRIL 17 ~ TUESDAY ~ 7-8PM

Registration required (Ages 10 and up)  
Mushrooms are a source of great fascination  
and lots of questions for many outdoor  
enthusiasts. Now you can learn from an  
expert how to find, identify, and prepare wild  
mushrooms for your nature enjoyment and  
culinary delight. Maxine Stone, past president  
of the Missouri Mycological Society and author  
of the recently published *Missouri's Wild  
Mushrooms—A Guide To Hunting, Identifying,  
and Cooking the State's Most Common  
Mushrooms*, returns to  
share her  
expertise  
during this  
indoor  
presentation.  
Books will  
be available  
to purchase  
following the  
program.

#### Natural Events Calendar:

April 9  
Begin looking  
for morel  
mushrooms



*Missouri's Wild Mushrooms—A Guide To Hunting,  
Identifying, and Cooking the State's Most  
Common Mushrooms* is the 20 percent off featured  
publication during the months of March and April.

## LITTLE ACORNS

Registration required (Ages 3-6) Programs  
are 45 minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE  
ACORNS programs to one per month.

### TOTS AND TOADS

APRIL 4 ~ WEDNESDAY ~ 11AM OR 1:30PM

APRIL 21 ~ SATURDAY ~ 11AM

Missouri toads are colorful, harmless, vocal,  
and valuable. We'll have fun learning about  
these cool creatures.

### FISH GOTTA SWIM

APRIL 13 ~ FRIDAY ~ 11AM OR 1:30PM

Join the fun and "dive underwater" to get a  
close-up look at fish without getting wet.

### HOORAY FOR HUMMINGBIRDS

APRIL 18 ~ WEDNESDAY ~ 11AM OR 1:30PM

Preschoolers, give a cheer to welcome the  
ruby-throated hummingbirds back to the  
Ozarks. Catch the excitement of learning  
about these jewels of the bird world.

### BABES IN THE WOODS AND BIRDS TOO!

APRIL 20 ~ FRIDAY ~ 10-11AM

APRIL 21 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10-11AM

Registration required (Ages 0-2) Birds are busy  
singing and nesting! Bring your favorite 0-2  
year old and a stroller and join us on a guided  
bird hike.

### SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE

APRIL 20 ~ FRIDAY ~ 1-2:30PM

Registration required (Ages 7 and up) Take a  
casual stroll with Volunteer Specialist Ruby Ball  
for a close look at spring wildflowers.

### CONSERVATION KIDS' CLUB ANIMAL COMMUNICATION

APRIL 26 ~ THURSDAY ~ 6:30-7:45PM

Registration required (Ages 7-12) Animal  
communication is a hoot! Learn about some of  
the entertaining and interesting ways animals  
communicate to each other through sounds,  
smells, visual cues, and touch. Please, no  
younger siblings and only one adult per group  
of kids.

### SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE

APRIL 27 ~ FRIDAY ~ 1-2:30PM

Registration required (Ages 7 and up) Take a  
casual stroll with Volunteer Specialist Ruby Ball  
for a close look at spring wildflowers along the  
trail.

### CONSERVATION TEEN CLUB WILDFLOWER AND PHOTOGRAPHY HIKE

APRIL 28 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10AM-3PM

Registration required (Ages 12-17) Join us  
for a wildflower and photography hike at the  
nature center to take pictures and identify  
wildflowers. Bring a digital or film camera. After  
the hike, we'll put together a pictorial journal of  
the digital wildflower photos we have identified.  
Lunch and drinks will be provided.

# Shepherd of the Hills FISH HATCHERY & CONSERVATION CENTER



483 HATCHERY RD.  
BRANSON, MO 65616

The Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center is located on 221 acres in Branson off Highway 165 next to Table Rock Dam. Outdoors, visitors will experience an active fish hatchery with 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in 30 pools with opportunities to feed the fish. Indoors, enjoy a 3,500 gallon aquarium and hands-on nature exhibits and purchase hunting and fishing permits. The area also features four hiking trails, a picnic area, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Taneycomo.

#### FACILITY HOURS:

##### Memorial Day – Labor Day

Sunday – Saturday: 9am – 6pm

##### Remainder of year

Sunday – Saturday: 9am – 5pm

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

#### AREA AND TRAIL HOURS:

4am – 10pm

The area is open to fishing 24 hours daily, but special permits and regulations do apply. Check the current fishing regulations or call for details.

#### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Call 417-334-4865, Ext. 0, to sign up for a program requiring registration. Programs are free.

**WEBSITE:** [mdc.mo.gov/2853](http://mdc.mo.gov/2853)

#### FISHING LAKE TANEYCOMO:



Before fishing on Lake Taneycomo, become familiar with the regulations and restrictions. Come by for a free brochure

of the entire lake including

fishing accesses. For specific details about trout fishing here and across the state, visit <[mdc.mo.gov/node/5603](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/5603)>.

## MARCH & APRIL EVENTS

### HOME COMPOSTING TRASH TO TREASURE

MARCH 10 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10-11:30AM

*Registration required* (All ages) Want to save money and still have a nice yard? Want to find an alternative to hauling off bags of yard waste? This program will help you to discover many benefits to composting, how to get started, all the material you can “throw away” in your compost, choices of easy compost structures, and then how to use your compost “gold.” You will learn to make a difference by reducing the amount of material going to the local landfill. Dress for the weather because we will be both indoors and outdoors to see how you can set up our own outdoor composting area.

### MUSHROOMS

APRIL 14 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10AM-12NOON

*Registration required* (All ages) Don't know which mushrooms are edible and which ones are not? Have you ever found a morel mushroom? Join us and the Springfield Chapter of the MO Mycological Society for a presentation and mushroom foray. Dress for the weather and bring a mesh bag as we look for different mushrooms on the area. We will then bring them back to the auditorium for identification and to determine edibility.

## EARTH DAY



### 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRATION

#### SPECIAL EVENT: EARTH DAY

APRIL 21 ~ SATURDAY ~ 10AM-2PM

*No registration required* (All ages) Join us for our 5th Annual Earth Day Celebration. There will be several learning stations to help you become a better ecological citizen. Stations will include habitat games, nature art, hypermiling and alternative vehicles, water critters, bats, and much more. The first 500 visitors will receive a free tree seedling.

### Did you know?



The Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery is home to Branson's First ever Blue Star Memorial. Blue Star Memorials along highways and special locations honor all veterans whether they served in war or peacetime. The hatchery memorial also showcases Missouri native plants. This memorial was sponsored by the Shepherd of the Hills Garden Club with assistance from local veterans groups and the Branson Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Our Blue Star Memorial received the highest 2011 rating in both Missouri and in the Nation. Come see the beauty of this memorial and help us recognize the efforts of all of our veterans.



# Southwest Regional Office



2630 N. MAYFAIR AVE  
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65803

The Southwest Regional Office is conveniently located just west of the intersection of US-65 and Kearney in Springfield. The public may obtain information on land management, nuisance wildlife, educational opportunities, river and pond management, and more, as well as purchase hunting and fishing permits and obtain area brochures for Conservation Department areas.

**PHONE:** 417-895-6880

**HOURS:** Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm  
Closed all state holidays

**WEBSITE:** [mdc.mo.gov/node/257](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/257)

**M**any Missourians are surprised to find out that our wildfire season is in March and April. Most think it is in the summertime due to hot temperatures and the newscasts of California forest fires.

California and the other western states have mostly pine, fir, and spruce trees that dry out in the hot summer sun. Missouri is home to the deciduous forest—a forest that loses its leaves in the fall. When the oak and hickory leaves rain from the trees in October, they have already begun to dry out. As they lay on the forest floor during winter months, the drying continues. Leaves and dormant or dead grass are so thin that they can dry out very rapidly even after a rain or snow. By the time March rolls around, it only takes a spark to get a forest or grass fire going.

If you must burn outside, do so after 5pm as the weather factors of humidity, wind, and temperature are usually more in your favor of controlling the burn. The worst time to burn is

between 10am and 3pm. Have a water source and suppression tools close by. Remove all dead grass and leaves near your fire. Delay burning brush piles until the grass around them is green. Do not leave the fire until it is 100 percent out. Contact your neighbors and fire department and let them know you will be burning. Contact your local Missouri Department of Conservation office to see if it is a good or bad day to burn.

During March and April in Missouri, 30,000 to 50,000 acres burn every year due to careless burning. Be careful with fire!

– Tim Stanton, Southwest Forestry Regional Supervisor

**Wildfire  
Season Is  
Here!**

## Hunter Education



Register online for all Hunter Education courses at  
<[mdc.mo.gov/node/3477](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3477)>.

A complete listing of courses is also included on this website.

These free 10-hour courses are required for anyone born on or after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. Students ages 11 and up must pass a test at the end of the course to be certified.

Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. If you have any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permits or a Missouri Conservation Heritage Card, bring them to class.

### Missouri Department of Conservation Hunter Education classes offered in Southwest Missouri:

Location	Date	Time
Springfield Conservation Nature Center _____	March 9 & 10 _____	Friday, 6–9pm Saturday, 8am–5pm
Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center _____	March 22, 23, & 24 _____	Thursday, 6–9:30pm Friday, 6–9:30pm Saturday, 9am–12noon
Andy Dalton Shooting Range _____	March 23 & 24 _____	Friday, 6–10pm Saturday, 8am–6pm
Springfield Conservation Nature Center _____	April 13 & 14 _____	Friday, 6–9pm Saturday, 8am–5pm

### SPRING TURKEY HUNTING

**Youth Firearms Season**  
March 31 & April 1, 2012

**Spring Firearms Season**  
April 16 to May 6, 2012



See page 3 for turkey hunting safety tips and register to attend a *Discover Hunting: Spring Turkey Hunting Clinic* at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range on March 17.



**20% off**

*Missouri's Wild Mushrooms*  
*Missouri Wildflowers*

Available at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and Southwest Regional Office for \$11.<sup>20</sup> each.

Missouri Department of Conservation

## Follow, Friend, and Watch



[twitter.com/mdc\\_online](https://twitter.com/mdc_online)



[facebook.com/MDCOnline](https://facebook.com/MDCOnline)



[youtube.com/user/moconservation](https://youtube.com/user/moconservation)

## Nature Connections Newsletter

To receive the newsletter by mail, call any of the offices listed in the newsletter and leave your name and address.

To receive the newsletter electronically by e-mail, go to <[mdc.mo.gov/node/257](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/257)>, click the "Subscribe by Email" box on the right-hand side of the page, and scroll down to "Subscribe to Nature Connections."



**Native Plant Seminar and Sale**

**Saturday, April 7**  
**9AM–4PM**

**Springfield Conservation Nature Center**

A series of guest speakers will share the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will include exhibitors and a native plant sale. Call the nature center at 417-888-4237 to receive a flier listing the day's activities.

### Conservation Area Showcase:

## WIRE ROAD CONSERVATION AREA & CRANE CREEK

### LOCATION

Located in Stone County near the town of Crane, this two-part area is both a premier fishing destination and a popular hiking area. One portion of the area is located just north of Crane near the intersection of Hwy 413 and Hwy A. The southern portion is located south of Crane at the intersection of Hwy 413 and Swinging Bridge Road. Wire Road Conservation Area (CA) consists primarily of typical upland oak-hickory forest and bottomland hardwoods, including sycamore, bur oak, northern red oak, and black walnut. Known around the country for its unique fish history, Crane Creek runs through both portions of the area.

### HISTORY

If you like Civil War history, fishing, and hiking, then the Wire Road CA is the place to go. The name "wire road" refers to the pre-Civil War road that followed a telegraph line between Rolla, Missouri, and Fort Smith, Arkansas. Also, a field at the junction of Crane Creek and the original Wire Road was an important encampment during the Civil War. It was occupied by several thousand Confederate troops before and after the Battle of Wilson's Creek. A fork of the Cherokee Trail of Tears also passed through this area, as well as the famous Butterfield Stage Route. The Wire Road CA is a shining example of a wildlife area with a history of overgrazing and poor timber practices which has made dramatic improvements of land and stream habitats by applying sound conservation management techniques.

### FISHING

The popularity of Crane creek trout fishing is legendary. It is only one of two places in the state where true "wild" trout have thrived for over 100 years. Trout, which are not native to Missouri, were brought to several locations across the state by enthusiastic sportsmen in the hopes that rainbow trout would become established. With the help of the Federal Fish Hatchery in Neosho, rainbow trout were shipped by specially designed railcars from the McCloud River in Northern California to Missouri. Except for Crane Creek and Capps Creek (near Neosho), none of the trout survived Missouri's warm summers. An interesting note is that due to habitat loss and interbreeding with other trout in northern California, Crane Creek is one of only a handful of places in the country where a pure strain of McCloud rainbow trout still exist today.

Fishing for these elusive and skittish trout is a treat. Designated as a Blue Ribbon Trout Area, special regulations apply such as artificial lures and flies only, minimum length of 18 inches, and a daily limit of one fish per day. The cold, spring-fed creek allows limited bank fishing, but ample wading. True trout enthusiasts consider catching one of these wild trout as an opportunity of a lifetime.

### HIKING

Wire Road CA has two trails on the northern portion. One popular trail is a 1.3 mile-long foot trail which follows a large portion of Crane Creek. This trail allows for wonderful opportunities for bird watching and nature photography. The longer 2.4 mile trail is designated for foot traffic and horseback riding. Remember that horses are strictly forbidden to enter Crane Creek. Both trails offer a wonderful glimpse of the Ozark terrain of southern Missouri.

### HUNTING

Wire Road CA is open to statewide regulations for hunting, except that deer hunting is limited to archery and muzzleloading methods only. See the area regulations for more specific restrictions regarding portable tree stands, blinds, and decoys.

While most visitors experience the Wire Road CA in the spring or fall, it is a great place to visit any time of the year. Don't forget to bring a bottle of water, walking stick, and a camera. For those who are after the elusive McCloud rainbow trout remember that these trout have eluded predators for over 100 years, so walk quietly and cast carefully. For more information about the Wire Road CA, visit the website at <[mdc.mo.gov/a8307](http://mdc.mo.gov/a8307)>.